



## Illinois Wesleyan University Digital Commons @ IWU

---

John Wesley Powell Student Research  
Conference

2014, 25th Annual JWP Conference

---

Apr 11th, 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

# Differentiation Strategies Through Reading Centers

Shelby Kottemann

*Illinois Wesleyan University*

Leah Nillas, Faculty Advisor

*Illinois Wesleyan University*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc>



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

---

Shelby Kottemann and Leah Nillas, Faculty Advisor, "Differentiation Strategies Through Reading Centers" (April 11, 2014). *John Wesley Powell Student Research Conference*. Paper 12.  
<http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc/2014/ESposters/12>

This Event is brought to you for free and open access by The Ames Library, the Andrew W. Mellon Center for Curricular and Faculty Development, the Office of the Provost and the Office of the President. It has been accepted for inclusion in Digital Commons @ IWU by the faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@iwu.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@iwu.edu).

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

# DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES THROUGH READING CENTERS

Shelby Kottemann and Leah Nillas\*  
Educational Studies, Illinois Wesleyan University

## Research Question

How can I differentiate the teaching of language arts in first grade?

## Literature Review

- ❖ There is currently no diagnostic test to measure students' intelligences that is proven to be stronger than the others (McClellan and Conti, 2008).
- ❖ According to Parsons (2013) to differentiate, teachers must be reflective on-action and in-action.
- ❖ Collaboration among teachers and the incorporation of student choice motivate students and enrich the differentiated curriculum (Servilio, 2009).

## Methodology

- ❖ Participants: 23 first grade students from a rural elementary school (9 girls, 14 boys).
- ❖ Data Sources: Connell's Questionnaires, student observation notes, lesson plans, video transcripts, and samples of student work.
- ❖ Differentiated reading centers were designed based on Gardner's Theory.

## Results

- ❑ Strategies for Determining Students' Intelligences:
  - ❖ Employ multiple data sets when determining students' intelligences to increase validity of the results.
  - ❖ Depending on their distribution among the class, some students with similar intelligences must be blended into one group.
- ❑ Strategies for Planning Differentiated Instruction:
  - ❖ Consult fellow teachers and staff as resources for ideas and support.
  - ❖ Incorporating student choice students power in differentiating their own education.
- ❑ Strategies for Teaching Differentiated Lessons:
  - ❖ Even differentiated lesson plans catered to a particular group will need to be adjusted in response to the needs of each student in the midst of instruction.
  - ❖ The heterogeneous groups produced by Gardner's Theory-led reading centers create an environment conducive to peer tutoring and collaboration.

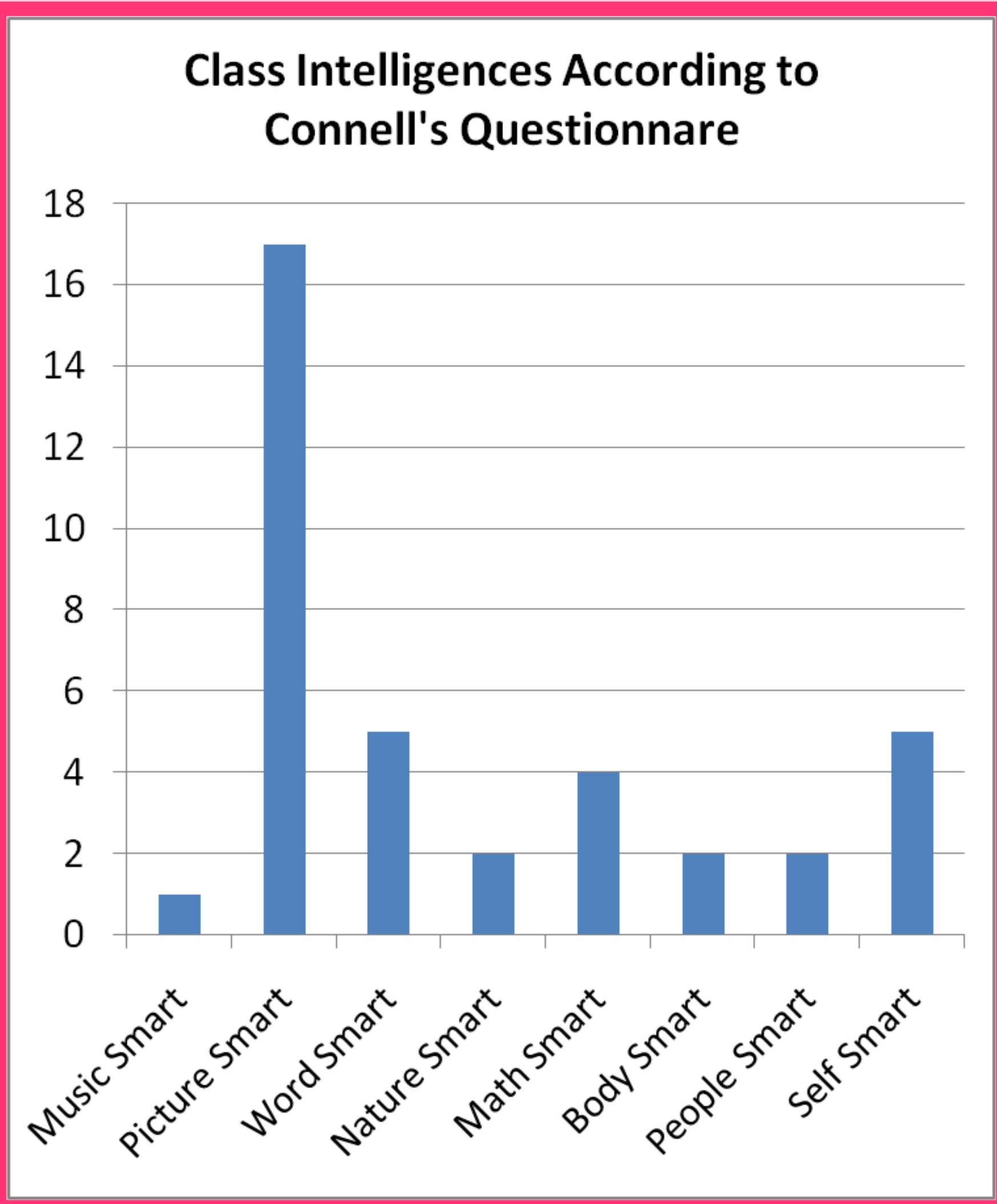


Figure 1: Based on the results of this questionnaire, students were grouped according to their strongest intelligence.

## Conclusions

- ❖ Throughout the differentiation process, it is essential to be responsive to students in the midst of instruction.
- ❖ It is important to include colleagues in the process of differentiation to design a dynamic curriculum.
- ❖ Further research is needed to determine which strategies for differentiation are most effective in the first grade language arts classroom.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor Nillas for guiding me through my data analysis and also my cooperating teacher, my students, and their parents for allowing me to implement this self-study in their classroom.